

THE MADHHAB OF THE LEADING NAJDI SCHOLARS CONCERNING THE ISSUE OF ‘UDHR BIL-JAHL

(THE EXCUSE OF IGNORANCE)

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The sons of Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab and Hamad ibn Nasir said in *Ad-Durar* (v. 10, p.136-8) when asked: “When the believer in Allah and His messenger says or does something that is kufr while being ignorant of that, he is not declared takfir of until the Prophetic proof is established against him. If he was killed and this was his situation before the spread and appearance of this da’wah, what should be done?”

They responded: “If he was performing kufr and shirk due to his ignorance and the absence of anyone to alert him, we do not judge him with kufr until the proof is established against him. However, we not not judge him to be a Muslim. (*Shaykh ‘Ali al-Khudayr commented upon this stating: “Notice here he is not ruled with islam and not labeled a Muslim.”*)

“Instead, we say: this action of his is kufr that makes one’s wealth and blood licit, even though we do not rule upon this individual due to the absence of the proof established against him. (*Shaykh ‘Ali al-Khudayr commented: “Meaning the label of kufr and the rulings of kufr from being killed or fighting or punishment. But in regards to the label of shirk and what follows it from a lack of asking forgiveness for him, it is not negated.”*)

“It is not said: if he is not a kafir then he is Muslim. No; we say: his action is the actions of the kuffar, and ruling absolutely upon this individual directly depends on the reaching of the Prophetic proof. The people of knowledge have made mention ashab al-fatarat (those who live in a time of widespread ignorance of what the Messengers brought) will be tested on the Day of Resurrection. They did not make their ruling the judgement of the kuffar nor that of the abrar (righteous).”

Shaykh Hussayn and ‘Abdullah, the sons of Muhammad ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab, said in Ad-Durar as-Saniyyah (v. 10, p. 142) about the one who dies before this da’wah and was unaware of Islam (tawhid) and those actions [of shirk] which the people today performed while the proof was not established, what is the ruling?

They replied: “Verily, whoever dies from the people of shirk before this da’wah reaches him, the ruling upon him, if he is known for performing shirk, embraces it, and dies upon that, then from the apparent he has died upon kufr. (Shaykh ‘Ali al-Khudayr comments: “Notice before they labeled him a mushrik due to him performing shirk and embracing it. The statement ‘died upon kufr’ meaning shirk, and that is due to what they say after it: ‘sacrificing is not done on his behalf…’. These are the rulings of the mushrikin. ‘It is not [befitting] for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allah’s forgiveness for the mushrikin, even though they be of kin…’.”)

“He is not supplicated for, sacrificing is not done on his behalf, nor is charity. As for the actual reality of his affair, then it is left to Allah (ta’ala). If the proof was established upon during his life and he was obstinate, he is a kafir outwardly and inwardly; and if the proof was not established upon him, his affair is left to Allah (ta’ala).” (Shaykh ‘Ali al-Khudayr commented: “Notice they did not label him a Muslim.”)

Here they affirmed his apparent kufr.

Shaykh ‘Abdul-‘Aziz, the judge of ad-Dir’iyyah, in Ar-Rasa’il wal-Masa’il an-Najdiyyah (v. 5, p. 576) said in response to a question posed to him about the believer in Allah and His messenger, if he says or does something that is kufr while being ignorant of that, is he not declared takfir of until the Prophetic proof is established against him?
He stated: “If he was performing kufr and shirk due to his ignorance and the absence of anyone to alert him, we do not judge him with kufr until the proof is established against him. However, we not not judge him to be a Muslim. (Shaykh ‘Ali al-Khudayr commented upon this stating: “Notice here he did not label him a Muslim, not to speak of a muwahhid or mumin. The negation of kufr does not imply the affirmation that he is a Muslim. And this is concerning all their speech.”)

“Instead, we say: this action of his is kufr that makes one’s wealth and blood licit, even though we do not rule upon this individual due to the absence of the proof established against him. It is not said: if he is not a kafir then he is Muslim. No; we say: his action is the actions of the kuffar, and ruling absolutely upon this individual directly depends on the reaching of the Prophetic proof. The people of knowledge have made mention ashab al-fatarat will be tested on the Day of Resurrection. They did not make their ruling the judgement of the kuffar nor that of the abrar (righteous).”

As for Shaykh ‘Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab, he has an independent work on this entitled Al-Kalimat an-Nafi’ah fi al-Mukaffirat al-Wafi’ah. It is found in Ad-Durar as-Saniyyah (v. 10, p. 149). He mentioned within it the speech of al-‘ulama al-mujtahidun from the scholars of the four schools of thought in relation to a Muslim disbelieving and apostatizing, and that the first matter they begin the section on the ruling of the apostate is major shirk and takfir of them and its people and the absence of their excuse of ignorance.

Additional clarification not from Shaykh ‘Ali al-Khudayr’s book:

To elaborate and explain further on what is meant here is that there is a distinction made between the asma (labels) and ahkam (rulings) of the din before the hujjah and after the hujjah in relation to that which nullifies asl ad-din. So the one who performs major shirk and major kufr which nullifies asl ad-din is given the general label of kufr and shirk (i.e., a mushrik kafir). However, the ruling that these labels imply is suspended and attached to the hujjah (i.e., the ahkam of the Hereafter), as there is no punishment until after the hujjah. As for the ruling in this world, then it is based upon what is apparent, and what is apparent is shirk and kufr.

Shaykhul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) explains:

Verily, Allah separated between what is before the Message and what comes after it in regards to asma and ahkam, and also gathered them together… Thus the label ‘mushrik’ is established before the Message due to him performing shirk with his Lord and sets up with Him another ilah and rival before the Messenger. So these asma are established [before the Message]. Likewise the label of jahl (ignorance) and jahiliyyah, and it is said “jahiliyyah” and “jahil” before the coming of the Messenger. As for punishment, then, no. And turning away from obedience, like His saying, “He neither believed, nor performed salah, rather he belied and turned away,” is only after the coming of the Messenger. Similar to that is His saying about Fir‘awn, “He belied and disobeyed.” Thus this was after the coming of the messenger to him as He (ta‘ala) said, “Then he (i.e., Musa) showed him the great signs, but he belied and disobeyed.” And He said, “But Fir‘awn disobeyed the messenger”

(See Majmu’ al-Fatawa, v. 20, p. 37-38).

Source: Al-Mutammimah li-Kalam A’immah ad-Da’wah fi Masa’il al-Jahl fi ash-Shirk al-Akbar, fasl: Naqualat tawdihat min Kalam Tullab ash-Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab, (Awla) al-Mubashirin Lahu al-Mulazimin Lahu (trans. The Complementary to the Speech of the Leading Scholars of the Da’wah Concerning the Issue of Ignorance in Major Shirk, section: Explanatory References from the Speech of the Students of Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab, (Firstly) His Direct Students Who Accompanied Him)

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